

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USUN N 01749 240125Z

43

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1749

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UN EGEN CU XM

SUBJ: CUBA AT UN

1. SUMMARY: CUBA DURING LAST FEW YEARS HAS SKILLFULLY USED ITS STRONG UN MISSION TO ENHANCE ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND EXPAND WIDELY ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS. CUBA HAS ALSO BROKEN ITS ISOLATION AT THE UN AND PREDICTABLY WILL SEEK AN INCREASING UN ROLE. END SUMMARY

2. IN LAST YEAR, CUBAN UN MISSION HAS NEGOTIATED ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SEVERAL ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES, ENGINEERED CUBA'S READMISSION INTO LA REGIONAL GROUP, OBTAINED UN GA APPROVAL OF CUBA'S MEMBERSHIP ON COMMITTEE OF 24 AND WORLD FOOD COUNCIL AND EMERGED AS ONE OF PRINCIPAL SPOKESMEN AT UN FOR RADICAL NONALIGNED. (RECENT NONALIGNED BUREAU MEETING IN HAVANA, WHERE CUBA DRAFTED MANY OF THE RESOLUTIONS, CONFIRMS CUBA'S INFLUENCE IN NA GROUP. IN THAT CONNECTION, WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT CUBA HAS MADE MANY OF ITS GAINS IN UN AND NONALIGNED WITH SPONSORSHIP AND ENERGETIC SUPPORT OF ALGERIA. CUBANS HERE, WHILE GIVING SOVIETS FIRM SUPPORT ON DISARMAMENT ISSUES AND OBVIOUSLY COORDINATING ATTACKS ON CHILE WITH THEM, CAREFULLY AVOID APPEARING TO BE SOVIET "SATELLITE". (IMAGE WHICH EE'S AND MONGOLIANS AT UN UNABLE TO SHAKE.)

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PAGE 02 USUN N 01749 240125Z

3. CUBA APPARENTLY INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO RAISE ISSUE OF PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE AT UN (USUN A-618). HOWEVER, DEGREE TO WHICH IT WILL CHAMPION INDEPENDENTISTA CAUSE, AND THE VIRULENCY OF ITS ANTI-AMERICANISM, MAY WELL DEPEND PRIMARILY ON ADVICE IT GETS FROM OTHER RADICAL NONALIGNED, SUCH AS ALGERIA AND TANZANIA. PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT ARE DEMANDS FOR SUPPORT BY PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY AND CONTRARY IMPULSES FROM US PUBLIC FIGURES, SUCH AS CONGRESSMEN, URGING LIFTING OF TRADE EMBARGO. IT OCCURS TO US THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF SUCH PUBLIC FIGURES VISITING CUBA WERE SENSITIZED TO PUERTO RICAN PROBLEM AT UN BEFORE THEIR JOURNEYS.

4. CUBA'S EFFECTIVENESS AT UN TRACEABLE IN LARGE PART TO ITS ABLE AND HARD-WORKING MISSION UNDER LONG-TIME PERMREP RICARDO ALARCON. HE IS AN INDEFATIGABLE LOBBYIST. HE IS ALSO A SKILLFUL DEBATER, RESOURCEFUL RESEARCHER, AND MASTER OF UN PROCEDURES. HE SCORED SEVERAL POINTS AGAINST US IN LAST YEAR'S UNGA DEBATE ON KOREA BY ASKING RHETORICALLY WHETHER UN SECRETARY GENERAL COULD DETAIL COMPOSITION AND DEPLOYMENT UN COMMAND AS HE CAN FOR UNEF AND UNDOF. WHEN SENATOR CHALLENGED ALARCON ON PUERTO RICAN ISSUE AT 27TH UNGA, ALARCON REPLIED BY READING GREETING FROM SENATOR TO VISITING SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION A FEW YEARS BACK.

5. ALARCON IS SEEN BY SOME OBSERVERS AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE THAT NO LA PERMREP IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN BOTH PERSONALLY EFFECTIVE IN NEW YORK AND FIRMLY BASED IN HIS OWN CAPITAL. SOME OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE LA DIPLOMATS HERE HAVE EVEN HAD DISTINCTLY UNEASY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS. ALARCON HAS NOT RESEMBLED THOSE FEW ASIAN AND AFRICAN REPS WHO VIRTUALLY WRITE THEIR OWN GUIDANCE. HOWEVER, HE HAS ALWAYS PROJECTED THE IMAGE OF A MAN ENTIRELY CONFIDENT THAT HE IS COMPLETELY ATTUNED TO THE VIEWS OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND FULLY TRUSTED BY IT. IT IS REASONABLE TO THAT CUBA, EVIDENTLY KEEN TO BREAK ITS ISOLATION IN THIS WORLD FORUM, WOULD ASSIGN AN ABLE AND ENERGETIC REPRESENTATIVE IN THE UN FULLY IN TUNE WITH THE COUNTRY'S COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP AND TRUSTED BY IT.

6. ALARCON'S PRINCIPAL LIABILITIES UNTIL RECENTLY WERE HIS INABILITY TO MIX SOCIALLY WITH OTHER LA'S AND HIS EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 USUN N 01749 240125Z

INVECTIVE ON UNGA PODIUM WITH HIS FELLOW LA PERMREPS. WITH RELAXATION OF TENSION BETWEEN CUBA AND ITS FORMER ENEMIES IN LA, ALARCON AT THE 29TH GA ELIMINATED FROM HIS SPEECHES DISPATCHING REFERENCES TO LA'S (EXCEPT CHILE) AND WAS OBSERVED STROLLING THE CORRIDORS EVEN WITH NICARAGUAN DEPUTY PERMREP LANG. NONE OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF ALARCON'S COMPETENT STAFF HAS HIS ORATORICAL FLAIR BUT THEY ARE ACTIVE IN CULTIVATING DELEGATES AND IN CHAMPIONING THEIR POSITIONS.

7. WE SEE NO SIGN THAT ALARCON WISHES OR EXPECTS TO LEAVE HIS POST AT THE UN. BECAUSE OF HIS RECORD AS A PURVEYOR OF EXTREME INVECTIVE AND HIS REPUTATION AS A BITTERLY ANTI-US IDEOLOGIST, ALARCON'S DEPARTURE FROM THE UN WOULD PROBABLY BE INTERPRETED AT UN AS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT. LATIN OBSERVERS HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME SAID THAT ALARCON WOULD HAVE TO BE A CAUSALTY IF THERE WERE A US-CUBAN RAPPROCHEMENT.

8. EVIDENCE THAT CUBA'S ISOLATION AT THE UN HAS ENDED MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

(A) IN 1974, IN ADDITION TO COMMITTEE OF 24 AND WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, CUBA BECAME A MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNICEF, GOVERNING BOARD OF UNDP, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF UNIDO, AND WORKING GROUP ON CURRENCY STABILITY.

(B) IN 1975, AS STATED ABOVE, CUBA HAS BEEN READMITTED TO LA REGIONAL GROUP. ADDITIONALLY, CUBA HAS BECOME A MEMBER OF UNCTAD'S COMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES.

9. CUBA MAY WELL BE EYEING OTHER SIGNIFICANT SEATS AT UN. FOR INSTANCE, IT HAS NOT BEEN A MEMBER OF SC SINCE 1956-57, OF ECOSOC SINCE 1954, OR A VICE PRESIDENT OF UNGA SINCE 1946. PREDICTABLY, WITH CUBA'S READMISSION TO LA REGIONAL GROUP, ALARCON WILL ADVANCE CUBA'S CANDIDACY FOR SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER PRESTIGIOUS POSITIONS.

10. ALARCON, WHO HEADS LARGEST LA DELEGATION (24) LISTED IN UN "BLUE BOOK" (AS COMPARED WITH 21 FOR BRAZIL, 18 FOR MEXICO, 11 FOR PERU, 8 FOR ARGENTINA, OR 5 FOR PANAMA) IS IDEALLY QUALIFIED TO PROMOTE CUBA'S INTERESTS AT UN. IN THIS WORLD FORUM CUBA'S OPTIONS FOR ACTION ARE INCREASING AND THE MEMBERSHIP

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 USUN N 01749 240125Z

INCLUDES SOME 90 STATES WITH WHICH CUBA HAS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. ONE MAY NOTE THAT THESE INCLUDE ALL OF WESTERN EUROPE, EXCEPT IRELAND; EASTERN EUROPE; 11 LATIN AMERICAN STATES; PLUS A GREAT MANY DEVELOPING AND NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND ASIA. AS A RESULT OF ENDING OF CUBA'S ISOLATION AT UN, AND ITS GROWING ROLE IN LEADERSHIP RANKS OF NON-ALIGNED, ONE CAN EXPECT CUBA TO PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE AT THIS YEAR'S SESSION OF UNGA.
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